

# Caementaria Hibernica

## Fasciculus Primus

1726 -1730

by

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## Editor's Introduction

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF IRELAND stands next in rank to the Grand Lodge of England, which is, directly or indirectly, the Mother Grand Lodge of the World. With this single exception, the Grand Lodge of Ireland has no superior in seniority, or rival in rank.

The establishment of the Grand Lodge of England in the year 1717 was followed, A. D. 1726, by that of the Grand Lodge of Munster, which merged into the Grand Lodge of Ireland, formally established in Dublin A. D. 1729-30. The next Grand Lodge seems to have been constituted in Pennsylvania in the year 1732, followed by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, which was constituted A.D. 1736. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania<sup>1</sup>, however, shortly after its inception, gave up its independent existence, and worked as a Provincial Grand Lodge, so that the Grand Lodge of Scotland can justly claim to rank next to the Grand Lodge of Ireland, as an autonomous Body working continuously from its formation.

This formation of Grand Lodges must not be confounded with the foundation of Freemasonry, and, in truth, presupposes the previous existence of Lodges of Freemasons in sufficient number to require a central control. In medieval times, the Operative Brethren had their "Yerely Assemblies," or, as they have been subsequently called, General Assemblies. These yearly Assemblies were of a merely local character, and claimed no general jurisdiction over the Craft, though in the time of Henry VI they had become so powerful as to challenge State interference. The tradition which places one of these General Assemblies at York under Prince Edwin as Grand Master, A.D. 926, is so ancient and so widespread, that we would fain accept it; but we are reluctantly compelled to admit that the most diligent historical research has found no contemporary evidence to confirm it. On the other hand, no fact absolutely inconsistent with the tradition has come to light.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Dedication Memorial Volume*, Philadelphia, 1875, where will be found interesting reproductions in facsimile bearing on the early history of this Grand Lodge.

It is no part of our present purpose to trace Freemasonry to its first origins, but a brief summary of the History of the English-speaking Craft is necessary, in order to appreciate the value of the services rendered to Freemasonry by our Grand Lodge. We Irish Freemasons believe that, through our Colonial Lodges, through our Military Lodges, and through our sister Grand Lodge of the "Antients," - to all intents and purposes an offshoot of our own - we can claim a large share in the remarkable spread of Freemasonry among English-speaking men of the last century. We believe, too, that our Irish forefathers of the Craft can claim to have held to the Old Way when the Ancient Landmarks ran some risk of being shifted by the premier Grand Lodge.

The object of this Introduction is to indicate, from an Irish standpoint, how these things came to pass. If the attempt at brevity should endanger clearness, the limits of space must be the apology.

### **Early Period of English Freemasonry**

To trace the origin of any society the roots of which lie deep in the past, is a difficult task, which, in the case of our Brotherhood, is rendered doubly difficult by the secrecy enjoined on us as to our Ritual and Work. Hence, in our investigation we use only those methods, and note only those surface indications, which are as open to the veriest outsider as to the most skilled Brother amongst us. So true is this, that the first considerable accession during the present century to our knowledge of Early English Freemasonry is due to a non-Mason, Mr. J. O. Halliwell (Halliwell-Phillipps), to whose exhumation of the Regius MS. we shall presently refer. Nor must we be surprised, if these conditions occasionally lead us into erroneous views, which can only be corrected by further painstaking research.

The case with us is as with those early voyagers who sought to map out the source of some mighty river. Some of them, in their progress up stream, noting the discolouration of the water, might follow the tributary that brought down that admixture, and claim that there lay the true source. Others might notice the snags and tree trunks drifting on the surface, and finding the stream that brought down the flotsam, might claim that as the source. Others, again, might be misled by the apparent width and volume of a feeding stream, or might place mistaken trust in second-hand information from persons supposed to be well acquainted with the facts. It is only when all these tributaries and side-streams have been thoroughly explored, that we can rest from our labours, and definitely announce that the true source has been ascertained beyond doubt, and that the side-streams have been laid down in due order.

All existing histories of Freemasonry have been divided into two Schools, the Mythical or Imaginative, and the Verified or Authentic. The historians of the former School, led on by the mystical and esoteric principles of our

Craft, have treated as historically proved legends which are but symbolic embodiments of eternal Verities, and forgetting that like conditions in all ages produce like results, have jumped at the conclusion that in old-world societies, long disused and dimly remembered, are to be found the direct sources of the Freemasonry of to-day. Such histories, sometimes erudite, often ingenious, but always unsatisfying, formed the main bulk of the Masonic literature of the last century. They followed the precedent set by the Rev. James Anderson, D.D., who prefixed to his famous Constitutions of A. D. 1723 an Historical Sketch, which he can hardly have intended as other than a didactic apologue, and which, A.D. 1738, he expanded by the introduction of details which, however well-founded and interesting in themselves, are irritatingly irrelevant to the history of Freemasonry.

Some of these visionary historians, like Lawrie, begin with the Chasidim; many, like Fellowes, begin with the Pagan Mysteries; some, like Oliver, and Coppin, connect our Symbolism with the Tower of Babel; some, like Holland, with the Pyramids; some, like Anderson himself, with the First Man; and one, at least, finds the principle of Freemasonry preordained before the Creation of the Universe. Their only common ground lies in a mode of reasoning that runs on all fours with the immortal arguments by which Captain Fluellen proved that Alexander the Great was a Welshman. Such speculations have drawn from Hallam, the most judicial of all historians, the chilling and contemptuous criticism that "the curious subject of Freemasonry has unfortunately been treated only by panegyrists or calumniators, both equally mendacious." To attempt a summary of these fanciful hypotheses would be worse than useless.

The Authentic School, submitting itself to the ordinary canons of historical research, takes no fact for granted until proved, and, less grandiose in its methods, tries to piece out in these verified facts the story of the oldest and the noblest Brotherhood that the World has ever seen. This School is yet in its infancy, and may be said to have been founded within the present century. In our own day, the promulgation of its doctrines was greatly due in America to the labours, during the latter part of his literary career, of Bro. Albert G. Mackey, so well known to Irish Freemasonry; and in Europe, to the researches of Bro. George Kloss, the most learned and accurate of our Continental Historians. Their results, brilliant as they were, have been almost eclipsed in England by the untiring toil of Bros. Woodford, Hughan, Gould, Sadler, and Speth, whose names are household words among the Craft.

We can safely hold it as proved that the Speculative<sup>2</sup> Freemasonry

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<sup>2</sup> The word 'Speculative' is used by Freemasons in its primary sense of Symbolic, or Theoretical, when opposed to Operative. The Matthew Cooke MS., transcribed *circa* 1400 A.D., from an earlier original, makes use of the word in this technical connection, and its adoption by Anderson in his version of the Old Charges, A.D. 1723, is one of the proofs that this MS was under his hand when compiling the Book of Constitutions. Otherwise, he would have substituted for Speculative and Operative, the Scottish terms Geomatic and Domatic, just as he used Fellowcraft and Cowan. "Domatic is derived from the Latin word *Domus*, which signifies a house. It, therefore, means of, or belonging to a house. Its Masonic meaning is transparent from its usage in former times, when a body of Freemasons, who were also Operative Masons, applied for a charter to found a Lodge, as was the case with the petitioners for Ayr Kilwinning, in 1765, they designated themselves "Domatic" Masons. On the other hand, members of Lodges who were not

of today is the continuous and natural development of the Operative Freemasonry of the medieval guilds. The origin of these guilds is lost in the Dark Ages, and our researches have not yet enabled us to bridge over the gap that separates them from the similar organizations of pre-Christian times. We can best illustrate our position by recurring to the simile of a river. Our explorers can navigate their bark up the stream, till they find it issuing from an impassable morass. Far away in the distance they can catch glimpses of other watercourses, similar to that up which they have been sailing. Some of these dim and distant streams may flow into the morass, and any one of them may be - some one of them must be - the true parent fountain. But our navigators have not, at the moment, the means of forcing their beat through the vast quagmire, and, arguing from the seen to the unseen, can only speculate on the probabilities of the case. The Dark Ages, with their lack of trustworthy material, form the morass, across which we cannot trace the channel through which our Brotherhood has derived its peculiar traditions and its characteristic system. Day by day, the labours of Hughan, Gould, Speth, and many another zealous student are clearing the ground, and we have now reached a point when any day may bring within our ken the clue that has hitherto lurked unseen. Personally speaking, the present writer is strongly inclined to believe that the parentage of our English-speaking Freemasonry will be found in the *Collegia Fabrorum*, probably introduced during the Roman occupation of Britain, and reintroduced, or resuscitated, some centuries later, during the Christianization of Northumbria. But this is merely a personal opinion, without such historical proof as would endure the *siccum lumen* of the Baconian method. Even if well founded, it leaves untouched the momentous question of the esoteric teaching of the *Collegia Fabrorum* and its remote sources.

The Operative guilds were mainly concerned with the preservation of secrets connected with architecture, and such purely symbolic instruction as was communicated in them may have been due to the occasional introduction of some non-Operative brother, of higher intellectual and social standing. But their principles and methods were similar to ours: the same secrecy was enjoined and maintained by the same methods; the same care was shown in the selection of candidates and in the promotion of members; the same high standard of morality was aimed at, and the same goodwill towards the Brethren was inculcated.

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Operative Masons (nobles, lairds; &c.) were styled "Geomatic" Masons, a term derived from the Greek word *yea* the land or soil, and therefore intended to show that they were landed proprietors or men in some way or other connected with agriculture. This was evidently the idea the word was meant to express at first, but it by and by was applied to all Freemasons who were not Operative Masons, and who were in those days styled 'Gentlemen' Masons." So says Bro. D. Murray Lyon, of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, in his *History of Mother Kilwinning*. But this derivation will hardly hold water: it may pass with the bastard Latin *Domaticus*, but no one sufficiently acquainted with Greek could tolerate the meaningless termination. Judging by linguistic analogies, Geomatic should be a corruption of Geometric due to the sharp sound of the short "e" in Lowland Scottish, aided by the jingling assonance of Domatic. Similarly, the word Cowan is first met with amongst the Scottish Operative Masons, applied in contempt to a "Dry-diker," that is, a spurious mason who builds walls without cement. Its etymology is uncertain, and the far-fetched derivations from a listening person, i.e., an eavesdropper, must be dismissed as inconsistent with philological principles. In the present writer's opinion, the most likely derivation is that which connects it with the French *Coion* or *Coyon*, a man of no account, a wretch. If so, it adds another to the list of low French words imbedded in Lowland Scottish, during the medieval intercourse of the two countries. For the curious derivation of the French word and its Romance cognates from Latin *Coleus*, see Littré .v.v.

The skilled artisans who had proved their title were deemed Free of the Guild, and we shall see that in course of time the non-Operative Brethren were styled Accepted, when their numbers became sufficient to require a distinctive name.

The earliest written records of our English organization consist of two manuscripts which were written about 1400 A.D., the Halliwell (or Regius) MS., and the Matthew Cooke MS. These appellations they derive from the names of their first editors, though the reproductions in facsimile issued under the auspices of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge have quite superseded the original editions. In this series, the Regius or Halliwell MS. is edited by Bro. R. F. Gould with all the critical apparatus that had long been supposed to be the exclusive property of the Scholiasts and the Ancient Classics ; nay, in right classical fashion, he has added to his commentary more than one Excursus of elaborate erudition.<sup>3</sup> Owing to the misreading of a crucial passage by its first editor, the Cooke MS. was long assumed to be the junior of the two, yet, for all practical purposes, these two manuscripts may be taken to have been transcribed about the same period of our literary history. This much, at least, has been settled by the dictum of the highest living authority on British palaeography, Mr. E. A. Bond, late Librarian of the British Museum, as well as by the convergence of all the internal and other evidence we have on the point. Both documents are transcripts, and, though indicating a far-away common original, are perfectly independent of each other in form, style, and treatment of subject. With regard to this unknown original, we are in much the same position as philologists would be, if no remains of the Latin language were extant, and it had to be reconstructed from the existing Romance tongues. The task would be difficult, but by no means impossible: at any rate, the existence of the archetype could be inferred beyond doubt.

The Halliwell (or Regius) MS. is metrical in form, the Cooke - MS. a plain prose narrative. There is no need of lengthy argument in support of the position that, other things being equal, the metrical is likely to be older than the prose form of the narrative. But other things are not equal. The Halliwell, or Regius, poem is much more ornate and diffuse, and plainly relates to a more complex and advanced stage of the organisation. In particular, there is embodied, or rather, imbedded in the Cooke document a form of the Legend and of the Regulations so archaic in its simplicity, as to leave no doubt of its being the nearest extant approach to the lost original. This MS., too, or a copy of it, is the only version of the Old Charges which we can assert with any confidence to have been consulted by Anderson, when compiling the Book of Constitutions, A. D. 1723. These circumstances have been brought out with singular literary acumen by Bro. Speth in his commentary on the MS., to which we refer our readers as being a model of what such a commentary ought to be.

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<sup>3</sup> A third extensive Excursus, on an incidental point, by Bro. Gould will be found in Trans. Q. C, Vol. V., p. 203 (1892). In this connection must be read an article by Bro. C. C. Howard, "On the Evidential Value of the Regius, Cooke, and William Watson MSS." Trans. Q. C, Vol. VI., p. 21 (1893) a disquisition that leaves nothing to be desired on the score of ingenuity.

We may take it, then, that the transcriber of the Cooke MS. has appended to the Mythical History of the Craft, the earliest known copy of the Public Constitutions or Regulations that have served to bind the Brotherhood together. They were divided into two sets ; the first, styled Articles, were intended for the guidance and conduct of the Masters; the second, styled Points, for the Craftsmen.

Notwithstanding the overwhelming interest and importance of such a document, we can only summarize here these crude regulations, the direct progenitors of the Book of Constitutions and the Ahiman Rezon.

### **“Nine Articles of the "Maister's Masons”**

- I. He "schulde be wyse and trewe every mann to berewardyd after his trauayle" (work).
- II. He "scholde be warned by fore" to come to the "Congregacion." and if his presence there be necessary, he must peril his life to come.
- III. "No master take no prentes for lasse terme" than seven years, so that the apprentice may be thoroughly taught.
- IV. No master shall take as apprentice a bondsman born.
- V. No master shall unduly favour his own apprentice.
- VI. No master shall take as apprentice one "heving eny maym" by reason of which he is incapable of doing a Mason's proper work.
- VII. The master shall discourage dissolute conduct.
- VIII. "Yf hyt befalle" that any truly skilful Mason apply for work, he shall get it, even if it causes the discharge of an "unperfite" (incompetent) workman.
- IX. "No maister shalle supplant a nother."

### **Nine Points for the Craftsmen**

- I. "Who that covetyth for to come to the state of the forseyd art, hyt behoveth hym fyrst, princypally to [love] God, .... and his master and his fellow's as his owne bretheren."
- II. He must "fulfyll his dayes werke truly."
- III. He shall "hele the councelle of his fellows in logge and in chambere, and in every place" where Masons meet.
- IV. He shall be "no disseyver of the forseyd art," and no traitor to its members.

- V. He shall take his fair wages without grumbling, and "fulfyll the accceptions of travayle " (the conditions of work).
- VI. " Yf eny discorde schalle be bitwene hym and his felows" he shall submit to the master, or the warden, with appeal to the verdict of his fellows.
- VII. He shall not covet his fellow's wife, nor his daughter ; nor shall he lead an immoral life.
- VIII. "Yf hyt befalle hym ffor to be wardeyne under his master" he shall be true to both his master and his fellows.
- IX. He shall help and instruct the weaker brethren "in hys Logge, or in eny other place," so that "the more love may encrease amonge" them.

The reader will see that these rudimentary Regulations neither gave, nor purported to give, any clue to such inner life as may have existed in the Lodges. They stand on the same platform as the Book of Laws and Regulations of to-day, plain proofs to the outer world of the praiseworthy aims and lawful methods of the Brotherhood.

By the time the clerkly Brother who composed the Masonic Poem (a century or more before its transcription in the Regius MS.), had set about his task, the NINE ARTICLES and NINE POINTS had grown into FIFTEEN of each, and the quaint legend of the Craft had become embellished by more than one additional anachronism, appalling to our neo-criticism, but natural enough in an age when historical pictures had to be painted without perspective. But the purport is the same; the distinctive tenets are the same. In these manuscripts, derived each through a separate channel from a common source, possibly oral, certainly traditional, our experts find unequivocal traces of Speculative Masonry.

These MSS., counting merely from the date of their transcription, precede by half a century the famous Ordnun-gen (Constitutions) of the Steinmetzen (Stonemasons) of Strasburg. The Constitutions, drawn up A.D. 1459 and repeatedly confirmed till their disuse or abolition A.D. 1731, gave to the Brotherhood of Strasburg a sort of supremacy over the German Craft. The German School has based upon them the claim that our English Freemasons were an offshoot of the Steinmetzen. But this is not so ; the pre-existence of our MSS. is inconsistent with the Strasburg parentage, and our Constitutions are far less elaborate, and, to the credit of our forefathers be it spoken, of far higher moral tone than found favour with our German Brethren. Indeed, a similar claim, more plausible though equally unsubstantial, might be put forward on behalf of the Craft in France, where a distinct chain of evidence can be traced back to the thirteenth century, through the Compagnonage and the Working Guilds (*Corps d'etat*). Rather do these three Brotherhoods, English, German, and French, stand to each other in the same relation as that which links together

the Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit languages, none being derived from the other, but all three bearing unmistakable marks of their parallel descent from a common stock. What common stock can they have had but the *Collegia Fabrorum*?

In the succeeding centuries, we have ample proof of the continuous existence of our Brotherhood in England and Scotland, but only inferential evidence of its existence in Ireland. The circumstances of this latter country were not such as to favour architectural development, and we can only trace our Craft by the occasional presence of bands of Freemasons from over-seas, employed in the erection of great ecclesiastical edifices within the Pale, and along the Eastern seaboard. Even as far back as 1200 A. D., two centuries before the transcripts of which we have been writing, we find evidences of the Brotherhood in Ireland. In the year 1190, Affreca, wife of Sir John de Courcy, a successful Anglo-Norman adventurer, set about building a monastery, called De fugo Dea; of which the ruins are to-day known as Grey Abbey, Co. Down, and which was manned with Cistercian monks from Holm Cultram, in Cumberland. This edifice was built by a company or Lodge of Freemasons, who had previously been employed on the great Cistercian monasteries at Whitby and elsewhere in the North of England. They left behind them on their work the characteristic Masons' Marks, to which we attach so much importance, because we can safely assume that wherever they occur they were made by Operative brethren, who were bound by the same ties, and had learned their lesson in the same way as ourselves; who, in short, belonged to an organization which lacked but time and circumstance to develop into the Speculative system of to-day. These Marks cannot be later than 1210, A.D., and are, as far as the present writer knows, the earliest in Ireland to which an incontrovertible date can be assigned. As they have hitherto been unnoticed, careful copies of a score or so of the more characteristic are appended, for which we are indebted to our accomplished Brother Thomas Drew, President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

Within the Pale, the national Cathedral of St. Patrick's, Dublin, owes its inception to Archbishop Henry de Loundres, circa 1210 A.D., who is held to have brought over his company of London Masons previously employed at St. Mary Overie, the newly constituted Cathedral of Southwark.

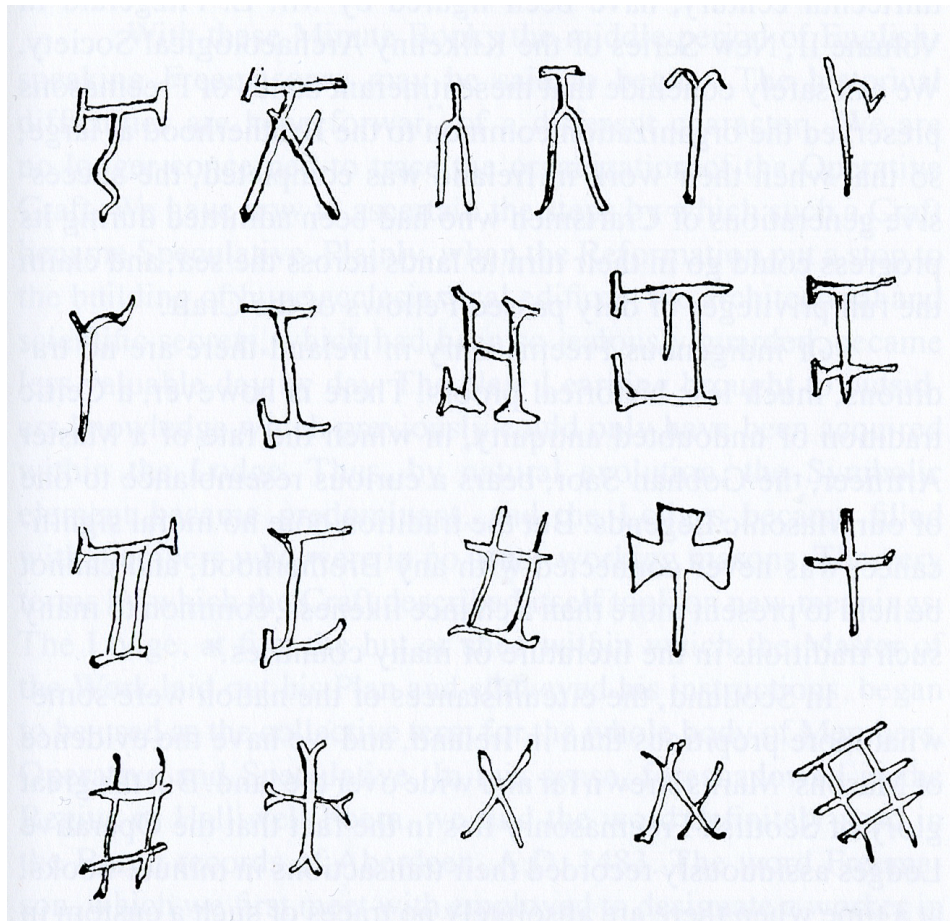
The diocesan Cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin, originally called after the Holy Trinity, was built by two successive companies of masons, imported from Somerset and Pembroke about 1175 A.D. and 1230 A.D. But these Cathedrals have in former days suffered so much from sword and storm, and have in our own time been so thoroughly restored by the princely munificence of citizens of Dublin, that the task of determining the epoch of the Masons' Marks has become extremely difficult, and no trustworthy deductions can be drawn from their occurrence. Other evidence we have none; there seems never to have been a Masons' Guild in Dublin. Even as late as 1728 A.D., when Freemasonry had taken root



amongst us, and Grand Lodge was on the point of being formed, the Masons' Arms are not to be found in Brooking's Pictorial List of the Dublin Companies.

## IRISH MASON'S MARK'S

1190-1210 A.D.



*Drawn to one-sixth original size by Bro. Thomas Drew, R.H.A.,  
President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*

At Youghal, in the south-east corner of Ireland, the Masons' Marks found in St. Mary's Church, and in the ruins of the Dominican Friary, buildings founded in the middle of the thirteenth century, have been figured by Mr. E. Fitzgerald in Volume II, New Series of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society. We can safely conclude that these itinerant bands of Freemasons preserved the organization common to the Brotherhood at large, so that when their work in Ireland was completed, the successive generations of Craftsmen who had been admitted during its progress could go in their turn

to lands across the sea, and claim the full privileges of duly passed Fellows of the Craft.

Of indigenous Freemasonry in Ireland there are no traditions, much less historical proofs. There is however, a Celtic tradition of undoubted antiquity, in which the fate of a Master Artificer, the Gobhan Saor, bears a curious resemblance to one of our Masonic Legends. But the tradition bore no moral significance, was never connected with any Brotherhood, and cannot be held to present more than a chance likeness, common to many such traditions in the literature of many countries.<sup>4</sup>

In Scotland, the circumstances of the nation were somewhat more propitious than in Ireland, and we have the evidence of Masons' Marks strewn far and wide over the land. But the great glory of Scottish Freemasonry lies in the fact that the Operative Lodges assiduously recorded their transactions in minute-books, at a time when there are absolutely no traces of such a custom in England, much less in Ireland.

### **Middle Period of English Freemasonry**

With these Minute Books the middle period of English-speaking Freemasonry may be said to begin. The historical difficulties are henceforward of a different character. We are no longer concerned to trace the organization of the Operative Craft. We have now to ascertain the steps by which such a Craft became Speculative. Plainly, when the Reformation put a stop to the building of huge ecclesiastical edifices, the architectural and scientific secrets, which had been so jealously guarded, became less valuable day by day. The New Learning brought to outsiders knowledge which previously could only have been acquired within the Lodge. Thus, by natural evolution, the Symbolic element became predominant, and the Lodges became filled with members who were in no sense working masons. The very terms by which the Craft described itself took on new meanings. The Lodge, at first the hut or shed within which the Master of the Work laid out his Plan and conveyed his instructions, began to be used as the collective term for the whole body of Members, Operative and Speculative. In this sense, foreshadowed in the Regius or Halliwell Poem, we find the word definitely used in the Burgh records of Aberdeen, A.D. 1483. The word Freemason, which we first meet with employed to designate a worker in Freestone,<sup>5</sup> that is, a

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<sup>4</sup> With a reckless disregard for appearances, *Gobhan Saor* must be pronounced *G'vawn Seer*. An odd result of the Celtic tradition is that it took such hold on the imagination of a charming Irish Lady, who constituted herself, with feminine audacity, an expositor of Freemasonry - for we have not only an Irish Lady Freemason, but an Irish Lady Historian of Freemasonry - that she broached the theory that the Craft must be of Celtic origin. The value of her work, *The Realities of Freemasonry*, may be estimated by outsiders from the fact that she took as her guide in the mysteries of the English Craft. Richard Carlile, the notorious Blasphemer, or, as we should call him today, Anarchist, blandly ignoring the circumstance that he was never, at any time, a Freemason, and was thus as competent or incompetent an authority as she herself. *Ex pede Omphalen*.

<sup>5</sup> The first suggestion of this derivation lay long overlooked in the edition of the Masonic Poem published more than half a century ago by J. O. Halliwell, (Halliwell-Phillips), and affords an instance of the great antiquary's sagacity. The earliest indication of the use so far traced seems to occur in the Norman-French of the Statute of Labourers, A.D. 1350, "*mestre mason de franchisepere*." In the next century, the word crept into

workman so skilful as to be entrusted with the delicate carvings that could be executed only in Caen stone and the like, gradually assumes the signification of "Free of the Guild."

This new meaning it shared in common with the other guilds, such as the Carpenters, Tailors, etc., who called those members Free who had complied with the conditions of apprenticeship, had paid their scot and lot, and had been formally approved, after due trial, as fit and worthy members.

As far as England is concerned, the explanation of the comparatively late use of Freemason in this sense is not far to seek.

In the words of Hallam, "It is remarkable that masons were never legally incorporated like other traders, their bond of union being stronger than any charter." As our forefathers of the craft had no need of a charter, so they had no use for the technical term: the weightiest testimony conceivable to their unity and solidarity.

In process of time, the number of Operatives from whom the Lodges could recruit their ranks diminished, and the number of Speculative Brethren, perforce admitted, became both absolutely and relatively greater, so as to justify their introduction into the very title of the Craft, thenceforward to be known as the Society of Free and Accepted Masons.

In the Scottish minute books, as far back as A.D. 1598, it is taken as a matter of course that the non-Operative John Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, an ancestor of Dr. Johnson's Boswell, should be initiated.

In England, the eminent antiquary, Elias Ashmole, was made a mason at Warrington, in Lancashire, A.D. 1646, along with Colonel Henry Mainwaring, in a Lodge at which there does not seem to have been a single Operative mason present. Within the last few months, the researches of Bro. E. Conder (of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge), Master of the Worshipful Company of Masons of the City of London, have established the existence before A.D. 1631, of a Speculative Lodge in full working order, apparently dating from Time Immemorial, and holding its communications in Masons' Hall under the auspices of the Company. Thus, before the close of the seventeenth century, the circumstances of the Craft had become such as to pave the way for the Revival of Symbolic Masonry A.D. 1717. The train was laid, and it needed but a spark to fire the magazine.

## **Modern Period of Freemasonry**

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common use. We find in the Churchwardens' accounts at Wigtoft, Lincolnshire, 1484, "Paide to Willm. Whelpdale, freemason, etc.," quoted in Nicholls (1797). In Bury Wills (Camden, p.104, ed. 1850): -1504. Will of John Hedge, "I bequethe to John Dealt, freemason, etc." Again, in Coverdale's A Spiritual Pearl, VI (Parker Society's Edition of his Works, Vol. I, p. ms) 1550. "The freemason heweth off here one piece, and there another, till the stones be fit and apt for the place where he will lay them: even so God, the heavenly freemason, buildeth a Christian Church." Lastly, in the rates of wages assessed for 1610, the justices of the Peace at Oakham clearly define the meaning: "A Freemason which can draw his plot . . . and set accordingly, having charge over others," etc. In Ireland, "George Kicroft, of Ballewalter, in the County of Wexford, freemason," made a deposition as to his losses by reason of the Great Rebellion, sworn to July, 1642 (MSS. Trin. Coll., Dublin, F. 2, 11, quoted by Bro. G. B. Burtchaell,

In the year 1717, certain of the London Lodges met together and agreed to form a Grand Lodge for the "Cities of London and Westminster." Two eminent Brethren, the Rev. James Anderson; D.D., of the University of Aberdeen, and the Rev. John Theophilus Desaguliers, LL.D., of the University of Oxford, speedily came to the front in this movement, and to their sagacity and foresight we may consider ourselves indebted for our present system. Great as is our debt to these Brethren, we must not suppose that they were in any sense the inventors of the movement. Despite the eloquence of the Seer of Chelsea, it is not the Man who makes the Time, it is the ripeness of the Time that finds the Man. And this was a mighty stirring of the waters, a wave of a great tide of religious tolerance and broad humanity that had been gathering strength in these Islands for many a generation, and that culminated a century later in complete religious freedom and political liberty. In the eyes of the philosophical historian, the proudest boast of our Society must always be that in the revival of our Craft, A.D. 1717, we distinctively adopted the doctrines which found expression, two generations later, in the philanthropy of a Howard and the humanity of a Wilberforce. At the head of this movement our Brethren found themselves, and nobly they discharged their duty as "Maister Masons, wyse and trewe." In the Book of Constitutions, A.D. 1723, compiled by Anderson from the OLD CHARGES of our Medieval Brethren, and approved by Desaguliers as Deputy Grand Master, are laid the foundations of the cosmopolitan Craft of today, at once tolerant and reverent, God-fearing, law-abiding, peace-loving, knowing no distinction of sect, country, or race.

Though the Operative Craft had necessarily decayed, these Lodges can hardly have comprised all that were at work in the City, and even of those that were present A. D. 1717, Anderson, writing A. D. 1738, seems to have enumerated only the four that still survived. Naturally, too, the Ritual and Ceremonies had dwindled to a meagre skeleton. In Scotland, in the sixteenth century, nothing but the bare modes of recognition seem to have been communicated. In England, there were at most but two Degrees, those of Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft. The esoteric teaching of the Third Degree, when communicated at all, was communicated in the former degrees. Little by little, however, the Symbolism, long disused, or previously unknown, gathered itself round the dry bones of the Ceremonies practised by the Operative Craft in its decay, and presently the Third Degree took Shape and Form from the necessities of the expanded Ritual, and was accepted by the Craft at large.

The newly-formed Grand Lodge, following the precedent of the General Assemblies of olden time, at first aimed at mere local jurisdiction. As all the Brethren of the "Cities of London and Westminster" were within easy reach, there was no hardship in the Regulation which confined the

conferring of the Master's degree to Communications of Grand Lodge.<sup>6</sup> Gradually most of the old Lodges existing from Time Immemorial in local centres throughout England gave in their adhesion to the new order of things, and became, in the technical language of the Craft, Regular, by submitting petitions for Constitution and Registration under the new Grand Lodge. Up to this time, every knot of Freemasons meeting in sufficient numbers, and having lawful Masonic work to do, had the inherent right of forming itself into a Lodge under its duly elected Master and Wardens, in order to accomplish such work. Many of such Lodges never applied to the new central authority for a Constitution, and continued at work far on into the eighteenth century. These non-Regular Brethren were not illegitimate or irregular, and had an incontrovertible right to perform all the functions and duties of a Lodge, so long as they conformed to all the Ancient Landmarks of the Craft. They seem to have called themselves, and to have been called by others, St John's Lodges.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in the middle of the eighteenth century, there was a large floating body of non-Regular Freemasons, owing no allegiance to the central body in London, and having an undoubted right to be considered legitimate Freemasons. In their Lodges, the Work and Ritual must always have lagged behind, and the members must have been ill prepared to keep up with the living and progressive symbolism current amongst their Regular Brethren.

Both in Ireland and in Scotland, we have ample proof of the continued existence of independent Lodges long after the formation of Grand Lodges. Even within the narrow scope of this work we shall have occasion to demonstrate the lawfulness of such Irish Lodges. In Scotland, the celebrated Lodge at Melrose gave in its adhesion to Grand Lodge only two years ago, and, having worked as an autonomous body from Time Immemorial to the year 1892 / 93, has only just taken its place as No. I. *bis.* on the Grand Lodge Roll of Scotland. Even at the time of writing this paragraph, some confusion is caused by a Royal Arch Chapter in Ayrshire still claiming to exercise its so-called Time Immemorial rights, without any control from the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland.

Up to the time when the Grand Lodge of Munster and the Grand Lodge of Ireland were merged, that is, until A. D. 1730, there is no reason to suspect there was the least difference between the modes of Working in Ireland and in England. The same enthusiastic Freemason, Lord Kingston, was almost contemporaneously, A.D. 1729, 1730, 1731, Grand Master of the three Grand Lodges in London, Dublin and Cork, and, as will be seen from the following pages, the Constitutions under which he governed the Craft were practically identical in both countries.

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<sup>6</sup> The evidence is not as clear as we could wish on the exact nature of the Master's Part at this early period. That is, as to whether the Regulation related to the conferring of esoteric teaching only on Brethren elected to be Masters of Lodges, or on those whom we to-day call Master Masons.

<sup>7</sup> Both the English and the German Freemasons claimed St. John as their patron, but which St. John was originally meant is not so clear. There are three Saints of the name, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and St. John the Almoner. This last saint, wholly overlooked today, was the founder, in the sixth century, of a charitable organization which bore in many ways a startling resemblance to our system. See quotation from Bazot, in Mackey's *Encyclopedia*, Philadelphia, 1874, s.v.

The contemporary view of the homogeneity of the Order may be judged from the Dedication of *Long Livers*. A. D. 1723: "To the GRAND MASTER, MASTERS, WARDENS and BRETHREN, of the Most Antient and Most Honourable Fraternity of the Free -Masons of *Great Britian and Ireland!*" True, there were no such officers common to both Kingdoms at the time, but the indication is valuable as designed, by an astute and experienced Booksellers' hack, to promote the general acceptance of his work by the Craft.

Meanwhile, a Time Immemorial Lodge meeting in York, the traditional home of Freemasonry in England, had erected itself, A.D. 1725, into a Grand Lodge, under the style of the "Grand Lodge of All England." The reasons for this step are doubtless to be found in local associations, in the difficulties caused by distance from the Grand Lodge in London, and, possibly, by feelings similar to those which actuated the St. John's Lodges in still clinging to their independence. This York Grand Lodge continued its chequered course till A. D. 1792, but never had any real influence on the fortunes of the Craft, except in so far as it testified to the principle, as it was then understood, of a second Grand Lodge at once legitimate and independent.

This brings us to the crucial point in the history of English Freemasonry during the latter half of the eighteenth century. This was the formation of another Grand Lodge in London A.D. 1751, eventually styled the "Grand Lodge of England according to the Old Constitutions." The reasons for the erection of this new Grand Lodge, as given by its promoters, may be briefly summed up in the statement that the premier Grand Lodge had sanctioned certain alterations in Ritual, which were held to be inconsistent with the system formerly in practice. Such a contention is fraught with the deepest interest to Irish Freemasons, because the standard, by which the Ritual was tried, was the Work current under the Grand Lodge of Ireland. Though its supporters in England may have been, nay, must have been, from the very necessity of the case, drawn from the before mentioned non-Regular Freemasons and from disaffected members of the premier Grand Lodge, yet the original founders of the new Body were almost to a man of Irish names, and the most prominent of them all was the Irish Brother LAURENCE DERMOTT. This great man, a journeyman painter by trade, raised himself, by his extraordinary ability and single-minded devotion to what he held to be the best interests of the Craft, to the foremost place amongst the Brethren of the last century, and has written his name in imperishable characters as the truest Freemason of them all. He was initiated under the Irish Grand Lodge A. D. 1740, installed as Master in Lodge No. 26, Dublin, A.D. 1746, and in the same year was there exalted to the degree of Royal Arch Mason. On his arrival in England he visited, or perhaps joined, a Lodge under the premier Grand Lodge- "was introduced into that Society" is his own expression—but as soon as he appreciated the difference in the esoteric working, he lifted his voice against the changes sanctioned by that Body, and became the mainstay of the Antients. It is seldom that history can surely ascribe the successful

conduct of any great Reformation to the strenuous perseverance and exceptional ability of any one man, but most surely the guidance of the Antients is due to this Irish Freemason. From the first, he never made any secret of the Irish training he had received; to the last, his Grand Lodge was united in the closest bonds to the Irish Fraternity; during the whole time of its existence its members were called Irish Masons, and its Lodges Irish Lodges. The principles which he held and the esoteric teaching which he disseminated bear the mint mark of the GRAND LODGE OF IRELAND.

In the minutes of Grand Lodge, there are indications which lead us to suspect that the alleged changes began A. D. 1730, and there is no room for reasonable doubt that they were fully sanctioned by A. D. 1740

These alterations, being of an esoteric character, do not admit of formal enunciation, but skilled Brethren, and especially those versed in Irish Ritual, can read plainly between the lines. Speaking generally, they consisted of two kinds: changes of omission in leaving out portions of esoteric teaching which had become too prolix in symbolism for communication within the time limits of one Degree, and changes of commission, in interchange of modes of recognition. Just as the Third Degree had become developed between A. D. 1717 and A. D. 1723, owing to the requirements of more space and time, for the adequate communication of its weighty moral teaching, than had been available under the system of two Degrees, so its concluding portion had become consolidated into a further Degree, under the style and title of the Royal Arch. Admittedly, this esoteric development cannot be proved in black and white; these matters are Aporrheta, not to be written amongst the Fraternity. But the case is precisely similar to many proofs held valid in the Physical and Natural Sciences, where all theories save one are by slow degrees found to be inconsistent with observed facts, so that, by a process of exclusion, that one theory ultimately obtains acceptance by all reasonable men. The new Grand Lodge, justifying its claim to uphold the Old Constitutions, jealously stood upon the ancient ways, clung to the old modes, and communicated the omitted secrets, though the development of progressive Symbolism had years before compelled the addition of another step or degree in which to communicate them.

Such appears to an unbiased observer, who can read by the light of Irish Ritual, the plain story, in brief, of the alterations and emendations that served as ostensible causes for the formation of the Grand Lodge of the Antients. But it is futile to allege them as the true and sole causes of the movement; they are but as the bubbles on the surface, showing the tendency of the deep stream beneath. Who will have the hardihood to maintain that differences which amounted but to a man drawing on his right glove before his left, or his left glove before his right, would have sufficed for the successful inauguration and persistence of such a movement, had there not been lying underneath feelings and principles deep-rooted in human nature? We might as well be told that the Protestant Reformation was due to the discontent of Augustine Monks, or the French Revolution to the baffled intrigues of ambitious Princes of the Blood. When we reflect upon the circumstances of the Revival, we can discern two fundamental principles at work. The first is that the secrets of the Craft should be cosmopolitan,

capable of acceptance by every Brother, and communicated in each case in precisely the same way, without distinction of rank or sect. The other principle is that none but fit and proper candidates should be received, and that every effort should be made to limit the Craft to men of moral worth and social weight. Both principles lie at the root of our Society. To neglect either, to give undue prominence to either, forebodes the ruin of the system. But with one class of minds the former seems to have paramount claims, with another class the latter. It is in the cult of these respective principles that lies the essential difference between the Antients and the Moderns.<sup>8</sup>

The Antients held fast by the Universality of the Craft, and insisted that what they conceived to be the full ceremonies should be gone through; the Moderns, thought more of the Respectability of the Craft, and were willing to attract men of eminence and rank by refining and, if need be, curtailing ceremonies which might prove irksome.

In such a sketch as this, it would be out of place to trace further the history of the Craft in England, but the present writer hopes at some future time to find leisure for a statement of the grounds which he conceives to justify his views.

For the present, the following propositions will show in a convenient form what those views are.

- I. The conversion of Operative into Speculative Freemasonry was a growth extending over several generations, perhaps over several centuries, and not a sudden and spasmodic revolution.
- II. When the Four (or more) Old Lodges united in the year 1717 to form the Grand Lodge of England, the Founders had ready to hand, and existing from Time Immemorial, a system so close to our own in Esoteric Doctrine, Nomenclature of Degrees, and Modes of Recognition, that the Revised Ritual was accepted without demur by the Craft at large.
- III. When the Grand Lodge was formed, the old St. John's Lodges, for the most part came under its influence gradually and by force of circumstances, and made themselves technically Regular, by petitioning for a formal Constitution, and by subsequent Registration.
- IV. Some of the St. John's Lodges continued their more or less independent existence for at least a generation, and many Freemasons, with an undisputed right to that title, were disinclined to give an unconditional adhesion to the new order of things.

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<sup>8</sup> The terms Antient and Modern were not epithets of reproach, but seem to have been willingly adopted by the adherents of each Grand Lodge. Brother Sadler points out that they occur in juxtaposition in a minute of Grand Lodge, 31st March, 1735. For purposes of distinctiveness, we retain the obsolete spelling Antient, whenever we use the word in a technical sense, as referring to Dermott's Grand Lodge.



- V. In the third and fourth decades of its existence, the Grand Lodge, for reasons deemed valid at the time, admittedly introduced certain alterations into the Ritual, and alternately slackened and drew tighter the reins of government.
- VI. Those Freemasons, who were already disaffected to the Grand Lodge, and of whom many had never been its Regular adherents, held these innovations to be unjustifiable.
- VII. The Grand Lodge of Ireland never adopted or countenanced these innovations, but maintained the Working which had been previously common to it and to the Grand Lodge of England.
- VIII. Freemasons of the Irish Constitution, who took up their abode in England, rallied to their aid the discontented English Brethren who resented the new methods, and supplied to them a leader, the famous Laurence Dermott, imbued with the more ancient and primitive system he had learned in Ireland.
- IX. This body of Freemasons of mixed nationality, but identical work, formed a Grand Lodge, posterior in point of time, but older in its Ritual and Ceremonies.
- X. Neither the Brethren of the Irish Constitution, nor the Non-Regular English Brethren, can be justly held to have illegally seceded from the Grand Lodge of England, but were as much within their rights (as those rights were then understood), in forming the Grand Lodge of the Antients, as the York Brethren who formed the Grand Lodge of All England.
- XL. The Grand Lodge of the Antients, deriving its Work, its Methods, and its Organization from the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and continually reinforced by Brethren of the Irish jurisdiction, was rather an offshoot of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, than a secession from either of the Grand Lodges previously existing in England.
- XII. The Grand Lodge of Ireland and the Grand Lodge of the Antients claimed to be Antient York Masons, not as being in any way dependent on the York Grand Lodge, but as possessing community of Work with that Grand Lodge.
- XIII. The right of this Irish Work to be called Antient, as against the altered work of the Grand Lodge of the Moderns, was implicitly admitted at the Union of 1813 A.D.

The facts embodied in these propositions are beyond serious question.<sup>9</sup> It is only the view-point and the inferences that can be gainsaid; even these are not Irish novelties. They were solemnly adopted by the premier Grand Lodge itself, just sixty years after the formation of the Grand Lodge of the Antients. Here is the Resolution of 12th April, 1809, A. D.:

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<sup>9</sup> They are to be found in Hughan's Origin of the English Kite, Gould's History of Freemasonry, Sadler's Masonic Facts and Fictions, or equally well-known authorities.

*"That this Grand Lodge do agree in Opinion With the Committee of Charity, that it is not necessary to continue any longer in Force those Measures which were resorted to, in or about the year 1739, respecting irregular Masons, and do therefore enjoin the several Lodges to revert to the Ancient Landmarks of the Society."* This was carried into practice by the Minute of the Lodge of Promulgation, 28th December, 1810,

*"The R. W. M. therefore proceeded to point out the material parts in and between the several Degrees to which the attention of Masters of Lodges would be requisite in preserving the Ancient Land Marks of the Order—such as the form of the Lodge, the number and situation of the Officers, their different distinctions in the different Degrees ; the restoration of the proper words to each Degree, and the making of the pass-word between one Degree and another, instead of in the Degree."* Finally, by the fundamental Article of Union, 1813, A.D.,

*"It is declared and pronounced that pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees, and no more, viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch . . ."*

These things being so, what admission of error, on the part of the Moderns, could be more candid? What testimony to the authenticity of Dermott's Irish Work could be more valid?

The Esoteric Work perpetuated by the Antients, derived by them from the Grand Lodge of Ireland, passed on by them to their daughter Lodges in America, and claimed by them to have been held in common with the York Masons, stands acknowledged to be the true and Ancient Working of the Craft. Nor is there a brighter page in our Annals than that which chronicles the strenuous and successful struggle of the Antients, except that which tells of the generous and ungrudging rectification of their error by the Moderns.

If we may compare small things with great, the relative position of the Antient and Modern Grand Lodges bears a striking analogy to that of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches after the Reformation. In each case, the newly-formed Body claimed to be the exponent of the true doctrine, and charged the old-established Body with having strayed from the ancient ways. In each case, the younger organization found a leader of exceptional ability, courage and devotion. In each case, the elder Body included in its ranks a greater proportion of the aristocratic and influential classes than its rival. In each case, the new system claimed to differ from the older solely in having rejected erroneous, if well meant, alterations. In each case, the younger Body was zealous and successful beyond expectation in the propagation of its doctrines in foreign parts, and held its own against the overwhelming prestige and matured organization of the older rival. So close is the parallel, that an Antient Freemason might, without irreverence, adapt the witty retort of the Irish Divine who was asked where his Church was before Luther, and to the question where his

Grand Lodge was before Dermott, might reply, *more Hibernico*, by another question, "Where was your face before it was washed?"

In the year 1717, our Brotherhood, following the practical instincts of our race, was the first of all societies, civil or ecclesiastical, to carry into effect the principles of philanthropy and tolerance that had to wait another century before they came into fashion outside the Craft.

In the year 1813, the English Brotherhood, for the second time, set an example worthy to be followed even by the churches, when differences and distinctions, precisely analogous to those that divide Christianity, were swept away to form one united and homogeneous whole. And so effectually was this done, that today the GRAND LODGE OF IRELAND is bound to the UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND, by even closer fraternal ties than those which bound it to its off-shoot, the Grand Lodge of the Antients.

PROSIT OMEN !